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Nations secure 'compromise' pact at COP30

• Deal drops 'roadmap' to exit fossil fuels; French minister blames Saudi Arabia, Russia and India for the move • Talks proceed despite US absence • Rich nations agree to triple adaptation finance for poor countries

BELEM: Nations clinched a deal at the UN's COP30 climate summit in the Amazon on Saturday without a roadmap for phasing out fossil fuels as demanded by the European Union, opting instead for a compromise to boost finance for poor nations.

The approval of nearly 200 countries came after two weeks of fraught negotiations in the Brazilian city of Belem, marked by the notable absence of the United States as President Donald Trump shunned the event.

Applause rang out in the plenary session after COP30 President and Brazilian diplomat Andre Correa do Lago slammed a gavel signalling the deal's approval, acknowledging the difficulties.

"We know some of you had greater ambitions for some of the issues at hand," Correa do Lago said.

The EU and other nations had pushed for a deal that would call for a "roadmap" to phase out fossil fuels, but those words do not appear in the text.

Instead, the agreement calls on countries to "voluntarily" accelerate their climate action and recalls the consensus reached at COP28 in Dubai. That 2023 deal called for the world to transition away from fossil fuels.

The impasse between the European Union and the Arab Group of nations over fossil fuels pushed the talks past a Friday deadline, triggering all-night negotiations before a compromise could be reached.

French Ecological Transition Minister Monique Barbut accused oil-rich Saudi Arabia and Russia, along with coal producer India and "many" other emerging countries, of refusing language on a fossil-fuel phaseout.

Ultimately, the EU, which had warned the summit could end without a deal if fossil fuels were not addressed, accepted the watered-down language.

"We're not going to hide the fact that we would have preferred to have more, to have more ambition on everything," EU Climate Commissioner Wopke Hoekstra told reporters.

Others offered harsher critiques. More than 30 countries, including European nations, emerging economies and small island states.

"A climate decision that cannot even say fossil fuels is not neutrality, it is complicity. And what is happening here transcends incompetence," said Panama's climate negotiator Juan Carlos Monterrey.

Because of the lack of consensus, Correa do Lago said on Saturday morning that the presidency was issuing a side text on fossil fuels — as well as on protecting forests — keeping it out of the main accord.

He urged countries to continue discussions on the matter under the Brazilian presidency until the next COP.

Despite the friction on emissions, the deal included financial components developing nations had long demanded. The agreement calls for rich nations to "at least triple" adaptation finance by 2035 to help developing countries cope with the impacts of climate change, such as floods and droughts.

The summit's conclusion prevented what would have been a political failure for Brazilian President, who had staked political capital on the success of what he called the "COP of truth". It also served as a test of international cooperation following Trump's decision to skip the summit.

"We also have to weigh the backdrop of geopolitics, and in the end there is no other process we have," German State Secretary for the Environment Jochen Flasbarth said.

While the EU described itself as "isolated" during talks, other major powers claimed victory, including the head of China's delegation, Li Gao, who said the summit would go down as a success.

Additionally, Saturday's agreement launches a process for climate bodies to review how to align international trade with climate action.

The EU had previously rejected language on trade in the text, as demanded by China and other emerging countries, but the final deal calls for "dialogue" on trade issues.—Agencies

BRAZILIAN President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (left) and South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa shake hands as they pose with other leaders for a group photo during a G20 summit.—AFP

G20 nations adopt declaration without US input

• White House calls process 'shameful' as Trump boycotts event • Leaders warn of fracture in multilateralism

JOHANNESBURG: A Group of 20 leaders' summit in South Africa adopted a declaration addressing the climate crisis and other global challenges on Saturday after it was drafted without US input, a move a White House official called "shameful".

The declaration, using language Washington has opposed, "can't be renegotiated", South African President Cyril Ramaphosa's spokesperson told reporters. "We had the entire year of working towards this adoption and the past week has been quite intense," the spokesperson said.

President Ramaphosa, hosting the weekend gathering in Johannesburg, said earlier there was "overwhelming consensus" for the summit declaration.

Envoys from the G20 drew up the draft on Friday without US involvement, according to four sources familiar with the matter.

The document utilised language long disliked by the Trump administration, stressing the seriousness of climate change and the need to better adapt to it. It praised ambitious targets to boost renewable energy and noted the punishing levels of debt service suffered by poor countries.

The inclusion of climate change language served as a snub to US President Donald Trump, who has doubted the scientific consensus that global warming is caused by human activities. US officials had previously indicated they would oppose such references.

"We should not allow anything to diminish the value, the stature and the impact of the first African G20 presidency," Ramaphosa said in his opening remarks.

His bold tone presented a striking contrast to his subdued decorum during a visit to the White House in August. During that meeting, Ramaphosa endured Trump repeating a false claim that there was a genocide of white farmers in South Africa. Trump subsequently said US officials would not attend because of allegations that the host country persecutes its white minority.

'Geopolitical fractures'

The G20's role in fixing economic crises is threatened by geopolitical fractures, leaders warned, however, despite the boycott, Ramaphosa downplayed Trump's absence and argued the G20 remained key for international cooperation.

However, French President Emmanuel Macron warned during the summit that "the G20 may be coming to the end of a cycle." Speaking at the opening, Macron noted that leaders are "struggling to resolve major crises together around this table".

In a sign of other geopolitical fissures, EU Commissioner Ursula von der Leyen warned in a speech about "the weaponisation of dependencies." This was a reference to China's export curbs on rare earths vital for the energy transition.

While the US skipped the summit, it still intended to take up the G20 baton for the next gathering. Trump plans to stage that summit in 2026 at a Florida golf club he owns.—Agencies

European, US envoys head to Geneva for critical Ukraine talks

JOHANNESBURG: Ahead of today's peace talks in Geneva, European and other Western leaders said on Saturday a US peace plan was a basis for talks to end Russia's war in Ukraine but needed "additional work", part of Western efforts to eke out a better deal for Kyiv.

After a US official told *Reuters* that talks on the next step toward achieving peace in Ukraine would happen in Geneva today, security advisers from France, Britain and Germany agreed to meet European Union, US and Ukrainian officials there for further discussions.

The official confirmed that Army Secretary Daniel Driscoll had already arrived, adding that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Special Envoy Steve Witkoff are slated to arrive on Sunday.

Meanwhile, meeting on the sidelines of a G20 summit, the leaders scrambled to coordinate a response to Trump's demand that Ukraine accept his 28-point peace plan.

"The initial draft of the 28-point plan includes important elements that will be essential for a just and lasting peace," said leaders from the EU, Germany, France, Britain, Canada, the Netherlands, Spain, Finland, Italy, Japan and Norway.

"We believe therefore that the draft is a basis which will require additional work."

The leaders expressed concern regarding proposed limitations on Ukraine's armed forces. They also noted that elements related to the EU and NATO would require consent from those bodies.—Agencies

Israel breaches peace deals again with strikes in Gaza, Lebanon

• Bombardment in Central Gaza, Rimal claims 21 lives • Drone attack on Lebanon leaves one dead, five hurt • Canadian PM, UAE president back comprehensive Palestinian peace plan • Hamas says 'escalating violations' place a responsibility on mediators and US

CAIRO: Israel continued its deadly assault blatantly violating ceasefire agreements on two fronts with airstrikes on Saturday that killed at least 21 people in Gaza and one in southern Lebanon, despite assurances from Palestinian resistance groups that they remain fully committed to the accord.

Israeli airstrikes in the Gaza Strip killed at least 21 people and wounded several others, local health authorities said, posing a further test to the six-week-old ceasefire.

Witnesses and medics said the initial attack struck a car in the densely populated Rimal neighbourhood, setting it ablaze. It was not immediately clear whether the five dead were passengers in the vehicle or included passersby. Dozens of people rushed to extinguish the fire and rescue the victims.

Shortly after the attack on the car, the Israeli air force carried out two separate airstrikes on houses in Deir Al-Balah city and Nuseirat camp in the central Gaza Strip, killing at least four people and wounding several others, medics said.

The Israeli military claimed a gunman had exploited the "humanitarian road in the area through which humanitarian aid enters southern Gaza" to cross into Israeli-held territory. The military said it was striking targets in Gaza in response.

A Hamas official in Gaza rejected the Israeli military's allegations as baseless and an "excuse to kill", insisting the group was committed to the ceasefire agreement.

Hamas said in a statement earlier on Saturday that Israel's "escalating violations" place a responsibility on mediators and the US to confront the aggression and preserve the ceasefire.

While the October 10 ceasefire in the Gaza war has eased the conflict — enabling hundreds of thousands of Palestinians to return to Gaza's ruins and increasing aid flows — violence has not completely halted.

Palestinian health authorities say Israeli forces have killed 316 people in strikes in Gaza while Israel says three of its soldiers have been killed since the ceasefire began since the truce began. Some observers are concerned Israel is seeking to reassert itself.

Attacks in Lebanon

Violations also continued on the another front, where an Israeli strike in southern Lebanon killed one person on Saturday, Lebanon's health ministry said. The death occurred in the latest attack despite a nearly year-long ceasefire between Israel and Hezbollah.

In a statement, the ministry attributed the death to "an Israeli enemy strike" on a vehicle in Zawtar al-Sharqiyah. The *National News Agency* identified the man killed as Kamel Reda Qarnabash.

The ministry also reported that a grenade dropped by an Israeli drone in the southern town of Shaqra wounded five people.

The Israeli military did not immediately comment on the deadly incident in Zawtar al-Sharqiyah but claimed it struck "several Hezbollah launchers that were recently identified and placed in military sites in southern Lebanon".

Lebanon has accused Israel of violating the ceasefire agreement reached in Nov 2024 by continuing its strikes and maintaining forces inside Lebanese territory. According to the health ministry, more than 330 people have been killed in Lebanon and 945 wounded since the ceasefire.

The attacks follow an Israeli strike Tuesday night on the Ain al-Hilweh camp for Palestinian refugees in southern Lebanon that killed 13 people.

A secondary school in the camp stated on its Facebook page Thursday that two of its students were killed in the attack, publishing an image of two adolescent boys.

Canadian PM, UAE president meet

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan met on Nov 20 in Abu Dhabi to advance bilateral ties and discuss Gaza peace plan, Canada's government said on Saturday.

Regarding Gaza, the leaders reaffirmed a shared commitment to a "comprehensive, just and lasting peace" based on the two-state solution, leading to a sovereign, independent Palestinian state living side by side with Israel.

Both sides welcomed the leadership of US President Donald Trump and his "comprehensive peace plan" to end the war in Gaza, as well as the adoption of Resolution 2803 by the UN Security Council as a key instrument for implementation.—Agencies

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